

PUBLIC SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 13, 2019

The Transportation Formula Committee met on Wednesday November 13, 2019, at 11:00 a.m. in the DDOE Library 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Townsend Bldg. Those in attendance were:

Chuck Longfellow, DOE	Kelly Shahan, Red Clay SD	Jason Bonner, Caesar Rodney SD
Bruce Ashby, Capital SD	Tyler Bryan, DOE	Kimberly Klein, DOE
Linda Sullivan, DOE	Garcia Garnett, Christina SD	Laird Stabler, Contractor Lobbyist
Ruth Ann Jones, CGO	Gerald Dutton, Contractor	David Sutton, Contractor
Tom Harmon, Contractor	Bonnie Dixon, DOE	

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**Introductions:**

Mr. Bryan started the meeting at 11:05 a.m. with introductions of New Committee Members. The representatives from School Districts will be Kent County: Jason Bonner (Caesar Rodney SD) and Sussex County: Natasha Rivera (Seaford SD). Representatives from Department of Education are Linda Sullivan (Field Agent) and Bonnie Dixon (Financial Secretary).

**Purpose of Workgroup:**

Mr. Bryan discussed the purpose of the workgroup and how we can identify problems with the current formula. Recommended revisions to the current formula are due April 1<sup>st</sup> which will cover the FY2022 budget. We will also address cost factors/deficiencies that are not reflected in formula.

**Update on recommendations from April 2019:**

The committee discussed fire suppression on new buses, retro fitting for Special Needs buses, Trauma Informed care to add 1 hour to 4-hour training. Mr. Bryan discussed proposed budget for FY2021 for contractor and districts to receive a tier allowance of 1 hour of additional compensation for double bus routes, and 1 ½ of additional compensation for triple bus routes.

**School Bus Driver Shortage:**

Mr. Bryan gave current report on issues districts are facing. District supervisors listed the following areas as reasons for the shortage: discipline, pay, no support from Administration, state-wide school bus discipline guidelines are needed, benefits, split shift, bus aide vs driver pay, poor recruitment, social media, treatment of drivers, company jumping, aging out drivers, overcrowding, parent demands, federal regulations, & problem with getting endorsements from DMV (too lengthy). Mr. Bryan informed committee that DMV has not released the regulation for 3<sup>rd</sup> party testing as of yet. If this goes through, this will be very helpful to Delaware. Mr. Stabler has been communicating with DMV over new Federal

(mandated) regulations. Mr. Ashby asked if background checks are federal regulations since he is losing drivers. Mr. Bryan will review statute since this is under Title 21 Chapter 27, Motor Vehicle regulations. He will conduct further research into other states on this matter. Mr. Stabler will start the process to try and change regulations regarding length of time since conviction on disqualifying offenses.

The committee discussed possible solutions:

- Higher pay
- Student discipline-state wide
- Cameras on buses
- Background checks
- Shut down fake news
- More communication between drivers/admin
- Mandatory bus aides
- Additional training
- Common Discipline
- Positive Education for Drivers
- Public Service Announcements-positive image on bus drivers
- Safety issues must be addressed by Admin.

Future Possibilities: Look into getting benefits for Contractors

**Out of State School Bus Driver “S” Transfer:** Mr. Bryan informed committee this is sitting in DMV’s hands. DOE sent draft to DMV on what we think should happen. Anyone with a “S” endorsement must then complete required DDOE specific training to maintain their “S” endorsement that transferred from another state. This would allow drivers to move faster through the process and attract more drivers to continue to drive when moving to Delaware. Currently, any driver that moves to Delaware with an “S” endorsement has it removed when they transfer their license and must start the entire process like a beginning driver.

**Discuss School Bus Safety:** Mr. Bryan presented information on NAPT-Zip.Zero.Nada.None campaign for (2025). New safety features are coming in the near future. Some examples discussed were: Predictive Stop Arm which monitors danger zones around the bus, and seatbelts on buses. This would be a 14 year process to have all busses equipped with lap/shoulder belts at a cost of \$8,000 to \$10,000 per bus. Mr. Bryan also discussed NTSB Recommendations. The committee was informed fitness for duty testing needs to be done along with teaching students how to open the doors. Ms. Shahan will email Mr. Bryan the contact at Christiana Care who administers Fitness for Duty testing at Red Clay SD. A discussion will take place on timeline for testing. The committee discussed bus evacuations being done more than twice a year. The group agreed having statewide instructions would be a solution to current problem.

**Discussion of Contractor/District Concerns:** Mr. Garnett proposed the request of possibly addressing the reimbursement rate of DESEG for bus contractors. Mr. Bryan informed Mr. Garnett that this would be discussed in finance meetings as it is separate from recommendations made to improve the formula.

**Next Meeting:** December 3, 2019, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., DDOE Library, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor-Townsend Bldg.  
**Close of meeting 1:09 p.m.**